



VT DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL
103 South Main Street
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Vermont

**Developmental
Disabilities Council**



Greetings from the President



This year we stepped up our activities at the State House to preserve and develop services needed by individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

In these difficult budget times with changing funding streams our self-advocates work harder than ever to ensure their voices are heard. The We Can self-advocates worked in a broad-based coalition to create the Vermont Declaration of Human Rights, and to pass language that assures that Vermont’s state budget is built with citizen participation and addresses core needs – a major step towards a budget to “Put People First.”

The year’s annual Disability Awareness Day explained beautifully how life has improved for people since the days of the Brandon Training School.

We co-sponsored *Anita* at the Green Mountain Film Festival about life in the community for a young person with Down Syndrome in Argentina.

We partnered with the Family Network for our first webinar on Vermont’s Developmental Service System of Care Plan.

Our Council continues to evolve as new members join and others transition into other commitments. We maintain our focus on our state plan goals as we diligently review grant proposals and the effectiveness of ongoing projects.

We proudly present our Annual Report to share our efforts over the last year.

Sincerely,

Wendy Kruger



Agency Representatives

<i>Ron Clark</i>	<i>Department of Vermont Health Access</i>
<i>Diane Dexter</i>	<i>Department for Children & Families</i>
<i>Carol Hassler, MD</i>	<i>Department of Health</i>
<i>Clare McFadden</i>	<i>Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living</i>
<i>Ed Paquin</i>	<i>Disability Rights Vermont</i>
<i>Susan Ryan</i>	<i>Center on Disability & Community Inclusion, University of Vermont</i>
<i>Jennifer Stratton</i>	<i>Lamoille Community Connections</i>
<i>Jerry Wood</i>	<i>Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living Division of Vocational Rehabilitation</i>
<i>Vacant</i>	<i>Agency of Education</i>

To Contact VTDDC

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<https://www.facebook.com/VTDDC>

Council Members as of January 01, 2013

Self Advocates, Individuals and Family Members



Donna Bennett *Individual* Brattleboro

Fred Breunig *Family* Brattleboro

Jim Caffry *Family* Waitsfield

Craig Davis *Individual* Middlebury

Gary De Carolis *Family* Burlington

Dale Hackett *Individual* Barre

John Hall *Individual* Newport

Catherine Hybels *Family* Norwich

Wendy Kruger *Family* Morrisville

Cheryl Phaneuf *Family* E. Hardwick

Marcy Ryan *Individual* Winooski

Jessica Sanville *Individual* East Haven

Cynthia Smith *Family* Fair Haven



Staff to the Council

Karen Schwartz *Executive Director*

Chelsea Sicely *Administrative Assistant*

What is VTDDC?

VTDDC is a statewide Council that works to increase public awareness about critical issues affecting people with developmental disabilities and their families.

**The Mission of VTDDC is
to help build connections and supports
that bring people with developmental disabilities
and their families
into the heart of Vermont communities.**

60% of its 23 members are self advocates and family members. VTDDC uses its federal funds for projects at the local, regional, and state levels. These projects bring Vermonters with developmental disabilities into the heart of their communities through public education, leadership training, and advocacy aimed at enhancing individual and family centered supports and services.



We Believe

- In communities where all people have a “voice” and are heard with respect
- In safe communities where all people have equal value
- In communities that are friendly and support equality and fulfilling relationships
- With opportunities, people grow, share their dreams, their abilities, and
- that the humanity we share is more important than our differences

State Plan GOALS for 2012-2016

Every 5 years VTDDC does outreach to write a new State Plan so that we can use our federal funds to have the greatest impact on people's lives. The Plan guides our focus and the grants we award.

Our members wrote these State Plan Goals and Objectives for 2012 to 2016.

The Goals grew out of what Vermonters told us was most important to them. More than 275 Vermonters responded to our survey in late winter, and over 150 came to forums around the state. We will be using the Plan to create activities and grant projects between October 1, 2011 and September 30, 2016.

At every stage of life Vermonters with developmental disabilities and their families will have easy access to information about services and supports in common everyday language.

Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council will support more Vermonters with developmental disabilities and their families to have strong voices to ensure quality of service and freedom from abuse, neglect and exploitation.

All individuals with developmental disabilities and their families will have equitable access to flexible, individualized quality services and supports.

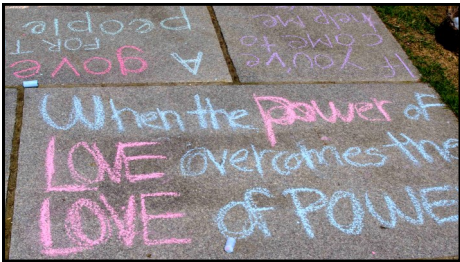
All across Vermont people with developmental disabilities will have more positive, supportive relationships that will help them be well and be part of activities that bring them into the heart of their communities.

More Vermonters with developmental disabilities will be employed for more hours and more pay in jobs they choose.

FY 2012 Council Budget

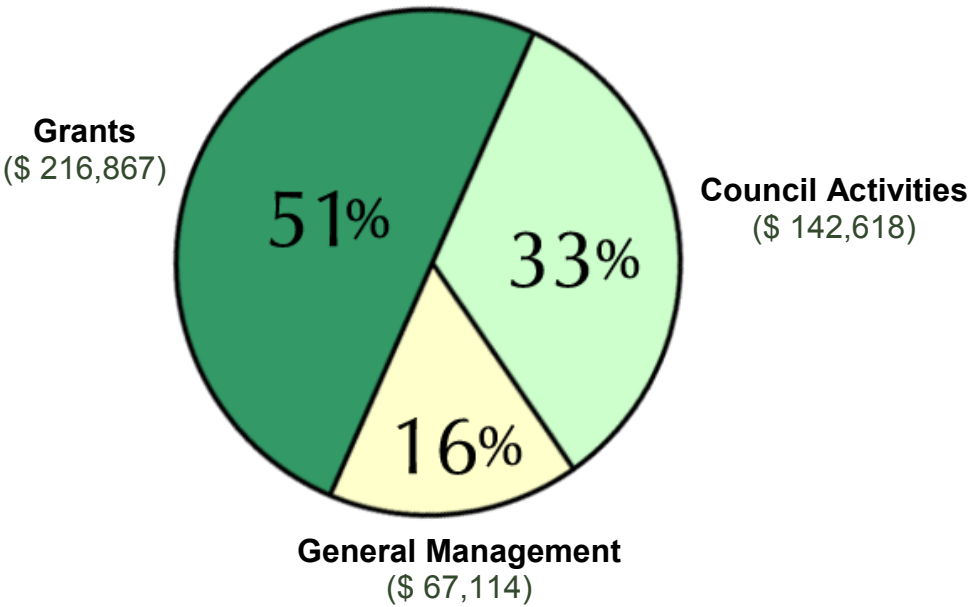
Grantees provided \$72,289 in matching funds [cash and in-kind services]

FY 2012* Income



Federal Funds	\$ 477,496
Less Expenses	\$ 426,600
Carry over to FY13	\$ 50,896

FY 2012* Expenditures



* October 1, 2011 to September 30, 2012

Media & Publications

State Plan publications include **2011 Survey Results** with comments from over 250 Vermonters about the situation for people with developmental disabilities (and their families) and the **2011 Comprehensive Review and Analysis of Vermont Services and Supports**.

Choosing Words with Dignity raises awareness of People First language. VTDDC distributed thousands of copies to diverse entities in Vermont and across the US to public schools, state universities, print media, managers' trainings, city and state government.

Boards of the Future and its workbook offer specific language and exercises to support people with developmental disabilities who are interested in serving on the board of an organization.

Sponsored in Whole or in Part by VTDDC:

Vermont Is My Home is a media campaign about inclusion. Each cycle of three one-minute films portrays Vermonters with disabilities who are vital contributing members of their communities shown between programs on public access and Vermont Public Television.



Grantee: CCTV



Speak Out for Understanding stars local high school students speaking about their own experiences living with developmental disabilities. Based on a nationally acclaimed service learning project, the film promotes awareness and equity.

Grantee: Harwood Union High School



Bill's Bill increases awareness about the hard work that made Vermont's special education law a model for the country. Told through interviews, music and dramatization, its stars are Vermonters finding their voice through art.

Grantee: VSA Arts Vermont

Grant Projects, Activities and Partnerships

Sampling of Results from Fiscal Year 2012

People Trained

- 527 people trained in quality assurance
- 18 parents trained in inclusive education
- 584 self advocates trained in leadership and self determination
- 892 people trained in systems advocacy

People Benefiting

- 97 people received scholarships for workshops and training
- 4,000 people benefitted from quality assurance efforts

People Active in Advocacy

- 604 people actively participated in systems advocacy
- 2 people gained membership on Vermont citizen boards
- 294 policymakers were educated about issues
- Awareness initiatives reached at least 741,783 people nationwide

LEADING TO POLICY CHANGES, including

- \$350,000 restored for case management and home supports during hospital stays
- *Passage of:*
 - ★ H.42 to end harassment and bullying in school
 - ★ S.89 Medicaid for working persons with disabilities
 - ★ H.79 redesigning the community mental health system of care
 - ★ H.489 setting up citizen participation in a budget process based on core needs

Highlights of Projects Funded by VTDDC

Developmental Disability Network Projects

Families Together worked towards developing a statewide network of families across the lifespan, connecting people to each other for support and to strategize and advocate on public policy issues.



Activities included outreach at events and conferences; four regional groups led by parent peers; informational evenings; medical school and education department presentations by family faculty; webinars on adult services, the legislative process and the developmental service system of care; and meeting with agency policymakers on housing options.

Grantee: Vermont Family Network [VFN]

Information, Referral and Assistance offers up-to-date, impartial, and unbiased information to individuals and families across the lifespan. Its rack cards and bookmarks let families statewide know there is a welcoming place where they can get resources and assistance about services and supports through an 800 number, improved website, and listserv. The project helped to widely distribute an Information Needs Survey to better meet family needs. It fielded calls on funding, community resources, respite, transition issues, and changes to the personal care services program.



Grantee: Vermont Family Network [VFN]



Vermonters who received training funds said:

“She was able to see that people accepted her at face value.”



“It made me feel good, and I felt connected with people. I felt accepted by the people who were at the conference.”

“I would not have had the resources to attend this conference. The process was easy and the conference was excellent.”



“It was fun and educational adventure. The workshops were a blast.”



“Knowledge is power! I shall be a much more educated and capable trustee and advocate for my son.”

“The exercise will help me work toward independence which is my biggest life goal.”

“My son and I learned how to fulfill our dreams of him getting a college education.”

“I was also able to meet many other parents in the same situation and exchange information.”

Executive Committee Fund

The Executive Committee Fund provided small grants to 70 individuals and family members to support their attendance at trainings and conferences, and to organizations for activities that enhance the lives of people with developmental disabilities.

In addition to individual grants, VTDDC helped fund:

- **Big Brothers Big Sisters** paired high school students with disabilities and volunteer peers for one-on-one mentoring and relationships that thrive during the school year. This mutually rewarding experience provides increased self esteem, social competency, and peer and community connections.
Grantee: Youth Services, Brattleboro
- **Lego Club** is a creative and innovative way to offer a social activity after school for young students with and without disabilities by building on a common interest.
Grantee: Colchester School District
- **Opening Doors** highlighted inclusive education and employment opportunities after high school graduation to train a range of transition professionals, students, and family members. Led by University of Vermont Center for Disability & Community Inclusion.
Grantee: Vermont-APSE
- **Special Education Advocacy Workshops** trained individuals and family members to understand legal rights and use a binder system as a tool to advocate for a student's needs.
Grantee: New England Law Center, White River Junction

VTDDC also sponsored the showing of ANITA at the Green Mountain Film Festival



Self-Advocacy Project



Self-Advocacy strengthens a statewide organization, provides technical assistance to local groups, and training opportunities that help people with developmental disabilities take control of their lives; solve problems; and speak for themselves at home, in their communities, and as part of cross-disability groups.

Grantee: Green Mountain Self-Advocates [GMSA]

Peer-run trainings included:

- Series of 6 basic self-advocacy workshops in 4 regions
- 7 Habits of Successful Teens for high school students
- 22 workshops at Voices & Choices conference attended by 584
- Self-advocacy for provider agency and high school staff and post-secondary THINK college students and mentors
- Developmental disability for prosecutors, lawyers, and crime victim advocates

Partnered in cross-disability and broad based coalitions

- Developed candidate forums for the Put People's First budget
- Co-presented with Sen. Bernie Sanders at the VT Human Rights Convention
- Co-authored the Vermont Declaration of Human Rights
- Recruited self-advocates for the THINK College advisory board

Public Awareness outreach included:

- WCAX feature story on a self-advocate attending University of Vermont
- Partnering on national webinar Sex & Relationship: How Do I Figure It Out?
- National cable show ***Taboo***, and ***Equal Time*** radio
- Stateline Pew Center web magazine on adult protective services crisis

In 2012 GMSA worked with youth in 7 regions; provided 16 technical assistance visits to 20 local groups.

"Your resources enabled us to partner with 10 other human rights groups, leading to the Vermont Declaration of Human Rights, and 12 Put People First Candidate Forums throughout Vermont ."



Advocacy in Action Projects

Advocacy in Action projects bring individuals, families, and organizations together to plan and participate in advocacy events that educate and inform policymakers and communities about the priorities of people with developmental disabilities.

We Can supports self-advocates to educate legislators with confidence about the problems they face, their policy priorities, and the positive contributions they make to their communities. Activities include skills training, supporting testimony and media interviews, and has led to passage of the Respectful Language bill and blocking cuts to programs that affect our most vulnerable citizens of all abilities.

Grantee: Green Mountain Self Advocates [GMSA]

Advocacy Response Network's website, Facebook, and rapid response e-mail alert system gets the word out so people can connect with the Governor, legislators, and state officials as strong advocates when it is important. Weekly calendars, notices, and policy briefs provide budget analysis and bill tracking; including redesign of the mental health system of care and civil action for abuse and neglect of vulnerable adults.

Grantee: Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights [VCDR]



Disability Awareness Day brought together Vermonter's with developmental and other disabilities and their families with legislators. The theme "We Are All Vermont Strong" focused on people with disabilities joining their communities to move forward from the devastation of Tropical Storm Irene. People met with representatives, the House read a Resolution, and the featured speaker from the FEMA happened to have a disability.

Grantee: Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights [VCDR]



Disability Media Awareness Projects

Disability Media Awareness projects present positive images of people with developmental disabilities on the job, at school, and at every other kind of community and social gathering. Links are available on the VTDDC website.

Living Connections Portraits is a traveling photo essay that focuses on the value and need for community supports through the stories of ten pairs of Vermonters of all ages from all across the state. Exhibited at the State House and Vermont's largest library, one viewer noted, "The poignancy of the stories is universal."

Grantee: Vermont Coalition for Disability Rights [VCDR]

Breaking Barriers are short films that profile the lives of three Vermonter's who are accepted and respected members of their communities. Featured on Vermont Public Television and its newsletter, with public service Announcements continuing on mainstream radio and TV.

Grantee: Mad River Media



Speak Up, Speaks Out is a video project made by self-advocates about living with a developmental disability and how neighbors, friends, and allies can help support inclusion. It includes a film, video clips, and presentation.

Grantee: Speak-Up Self Advocates & Counseling Service of Addison County

VTDDC members, staff and grantees were also featured in:

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|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| • The Next Frontier | • VT Public Radio | • WCAX |
| • VTdigger.org | • Rutland Herald | • WPTZ TV |
| • Washington World | • Burlington Free Press | • Times Argus |